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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SARAJEVO 001913

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SUBJECT: BOSNIA - SERBIA'S FM VISITS BOSNIAN STATE AND  
ENTITY LEADERS

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY: DCM JUDITH CEFKIN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND  
(D).

Summary  
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11. (C) Bosnia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well of representatives of both Bosnia's entities, welcomed Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic in Bosnia for a two day visit, of which Jeremic spent the first, December 25, privately with relatives in Sarajevo. Although Bosnia's FM Alkalaj was (appropriately) his official host, the trip's only novelty was the greater role as host assumed by Federation Vice-President Mirsad Kebo, through which both sides sought to balance Serbia's special relationship with Republika Srpska (RS). Jeremic also discussed open issues between Bosnian and Serbia with Bosnia's Foreign Minister, Sven Alkalaj, lobbied against recognition of Kosovo, and got snubbed by Bosnia's Presidency before heading to friendlier and more familiar turf for meetings with RS Prime Minister Dodik and President Kuzmanovic. End Summary.

Reaching Out to the Federation  
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12. (C) Although Jeremic's visit was officially handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Federation Vice-President Mirsad Kebo told us that he worked directly with Jeremic to arrange the trip to Sarajevo, met him at the airport and hosted him in his private capacity during Jeremic's unofficial first day in Sarajevo. Other Federation politicians, especially the Social Democratic Party, publicly criticized Kebo's hosting of Jeremic, calling it an unconstitutional affront to the state's exclusive competency in foreign affairs. Kebo told us that he was careful to make sure that MFA representatives were involved and present for all formal parts of the visit, but insisted that he intended to keep his channel to Belgrade open to "fix the relations between Sarajevo and Belgrade, and to demonstrate that Banja Luka does not have exclusive rights in dealings with Belgrade."

Federation VP: "Nothing New"  
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13. (C) Kebo denied the allegations, to us and in the press, that he and Jeremic discussed making an agreement on "special parallel relations" between Serbia and the Federation like the one that Serbia has with the RS. Kebo rejected the claim that he was seeking a relationship with Serbia at the expense of state institutions, and told us that such meetings were nothing unusual. It's true that Kebo's party, Party of Democratic Action (SDA), has not been shy about engaging foreign officials despite having no seat in the Presidency or leadership position of the MFA, however. SDA President Tihic went to Belgrade to meet Tadic (three days before he signed

the Prud agreement with Dodik and Covic), a meeting that Kebo had set up "to help Tihic deal with Dodik". Kebo told us that he also met Montenegrin PM Djukanovic during his December visit to Sarajevo, and that he and Tihic visited Croatian President Mesic and PM Sanader in October.

#### Foreign Ministers Discuss Outstanding Issues

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14. (C) In his meeting with Bosnian FM Sven Alkalaj, the ministers touched on the many open issues between Bosnia and Serbia, including succession and property claims, unresolved border disputes, outstanding claims for compensation over the use of natural resources for hydro-electricity, and the fact that the BiH-Serbia Inter-State Council does not function, according to Alkalaj's cabinet. Jeremic vowed to work toward the resolution on state property issues, but added that Serbia sought a comprehensive regional solution that would solve all the outstanding property disputes of the former Yugoslavia as a package. (Bosnia claims rights over properties located in Serbia, some of which Serbia has already sold, that had been registered in the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina or its government-owned enterprises.) In the meantime, Serbia has frozen all further sale of property registered to former Yugoslav republics pending a resolution, Jeremic told Alkalaj.

#### Snubbed by the Tri-Pres

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15. (C) Despite efforts to meet the three members of Bosnia's Presidency, Jeremic found himself snubbed when Presidency

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members Komsic (Croat) and Silajdzic (Bosniak) refused to see him in protest of Serbia's arrest and detention of Bosnia's former Tuzla Municipal County Chair Ilija Jurisic for charges of war crimes allegedly committed during the Yugoslav army's 1992 retreat from Tuzla. Although the snub dominated the press about the visit, both Jeremic and the presidency cabinets downplayed it. Komsic's cabinet commented to us that "it would have been different if it were Tadic, but they're not really the same level anyway." Serb Presidency member Radmanovic also failed to meet Jeremic, but made no public statement. Radmanovic's cabinet advisor (and son-in-law) commented to us, "We see him enough, anyway."

#### Jeremic Emphasizes Bosnia's Territorial Integrity, Dayton

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16. (SBU) On friendlier turf in Banja Luka, Jeremic met with RS PM Dodik and President Kuzmanovic. Press coverage emphasized Dodik's support for Jeremic's position against the recognition of Kosovo, and Jeremic's vocal support for the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and commitment to Dayton. All press releases stated that Dodik and Jeremic discussed Serbia's and the RS's special parallel relations. Commenting on the BiH Presidency's snubbing of Jeremic, Dodik said publicly, "I would have advised him not to go there. People should go where they are welcome, in Jeremic's case, that's Banja Luka."

17. (SBU) In an interview to Nezavisine, published December 29, Jeremic said that the RS "can rely on Serbia's support in every instance" and that Serbia had lots of understanding for the problems (not further defined) that the RS confronts. He followed that by noting that Serbia supports the RS just as it supports the Dayton Accords and the "integrity of its neighbor BiH." He repeated Serbia's support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of BiH, Serbia's desire for the stability and prosperity of the RS and of BiH, and stressed the importance of regional cooperation to move the neighborhood forward to EU integration.

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